

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TAGS: EEC, GR, SP

SUBJECT: EC RELATIONS WITH GREECE AND SPAIN

1. SUMMARY: THE TECHNICAL SERVICES OF THE EC COMMISSION HAVE FINISHED THEIR DRAFT OF THE COMMISSION'S OPINION ON GREECE'S APPLICATION FOR EC MEMBERSHIP. WE UNDERSTAND IT CONTAINS ESSENTIALLY TWO OPTIONS: TO AGREE TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP OR TO CONFINE THE NEGOTIATIONS TO DEVISING NEW ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WOULD BE DESIGNED TO PREPARE GREECE FOR MEMBERSHIP BUT STOP SHORT OF A FINAL TREATY, WHICH COULD BE DONE LATER. THIS VARIANT WOULD RECOGNIZE THE VALIDITY OF THE GREEK ARGUMENT THAT GREECE CURRENTLY HAS MOST OF THE OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERSHIP BUT FEW OF THE BENEFITS AND TO RECTIFY THIS IMBALANCE BY GIVING GREECE A LARGER SAY IN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS AND MORE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. UNDER EITHER SCENARIO THE COMMISSION WILL PROBABLY OBTAIN A MANDATE FROM THE COUNCIL BY THE SUMMER AND NEGOTIATIONS COULD BEGIN IN THE FALL. THE VIEWS AMONG THE MEMBER STATES AND INDIVIDUAL COMMISSIONERS DIFFER ON WHICH ROUTE TO TAKE BUT ONE SENIOR COMMISSION OFFICIAL NOTES THAT THE

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TREATMENT ACCORDED GREECE WILL PROBABLY SET A PRECEDENT FOR

SPAIN, AND WILL HAVE FAR-REACHING IMPLICATIONS FOR THE KIND OF COMMUNITY WHICH WILL ENTER THE 1980'S. END SUMMARY.

2. EC COMMISSION SECRETARY GENERAL NOEL TOLD THE DCM ON JANUARY 6 THAT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES OF THE COMMISSION HAVE COMPLETED AND FORWARDED TO COMMISSION VICE PRESIDENT FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS SOAMES A DRAFT OPINION ON GREECE'S APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP. AFTER SOAMES' REVIEW, NOEL EXPECTS THE REPORT TO BE TAKEN UP BY THE FULL COMMISSION TOWARD THE END OF JANUARY.

3. ACCORDING TO NOEL THE COMMISSION DRAFT CONTAINS TWO OPTIONS-

A) TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS NOW FOR GREEK ACCESSION AS A FULL MEMBER, WITH APPROPRIATE DEROGATIONS AND TRANSITIONAL AID TO MEET THE REAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS INVOLVED. UNDER THIS OPTION THE EC COMMISSION AND THE PRESIDENCY WOULD JOINTLY CONDUCT THE NEGOTIATIONS, BASED ON A COUNCIL MANDATE (I.E., THE SAME PROCEDURE AS WAS FOLLOWED IN THE UK ET AL NEGOTIATIONS).
B) THE COMMISSION WOULD RESTATE ITS RECOGNITION OF GREECE'S "VOCATION" TO FULL MEMBERSHIP AND WOULD RECOGNIZE THE VALIDITY OF THE GREEK ARGUMENT THAT UNDER THE CURRENT ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT GREECE HAS ACCEPTED MANY OF THE OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERSHIP WITHOUT RECEIVING THE FULL BENEFITS. HOWEVER, IN VIEW OF THE NUMBER OF ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN MOVING NOW TO FULL MEMBERSHIP, THE NEGOTIATIONS WOULD NOT BE OVER MEMBERSHIP AS SUCH BUT OVER WAYS IN WHICH THE CURRENT ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT COULD BE IMPROVED, GIVE GREECE ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY AID TO MOVE ITS ECONOMY CLOSER TO THAT OF THE OTHER NINE AND TO GIVE IT A LARGER SAY IN COMMUNITY MATTERS AFFECTING IT. THIS COULD INCLUDE A GREEK SEAT ON COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES AFFECTING MATTERS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO GREECE (E.G., TOBACCO, ETC.) BUT WOULD FALL SHORT OF GREEK PARTICIPATION AT EC COUNCIL MEETINGS. UNDER THIS OPTION THE COMMISSION WOULD CONDUCT THE NEGOTIATIONS, SINCE MEMBERSHIP AS SUCH WOULD NOT BE INVOLVED, AT LEAST NOT AT THIS STAGE.

4. UNDER EITHER SCENARIO IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE COUNCIL WILL BE ABLE TO TAKE UP THE COMMISSION PROPOSAL BEFORE MARCH, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHICH WOULD PROBABLY MEAN THAT THE EARLIEST A MANDATE MIGHT BE APPROVED WOULD BE BY SUMMER, PERMITTING NEGOTIATIONS TO BEGIN IN THE FALL.

5. ACCORDING TO NOEL OPINION IS DIVIDED BOTH AT THE COMMISSION LEVEL AND AMONG THE MEMBER STATES AS TO HOW FAST TO MOVE TOWARD GREEK MEMBERSHIP. DESPITE LIP SERVICE FROM ALL MEMBER STATES FOR RAPID PROGRESS, THERE REMAINS A RESIDUAL

UNEASINESS ABOUT THE LONGER-TERM IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE COMMUNITY OF MOVING TO RAPIDLY. NOEL WAS UNWILLING TO PREDICT WHICH WAY THE MATTER WOULD BE RESOLVED, THOUGH HE RECOGNIZED THAT FOREIGN POLICY CONSIDERATIONS COULD WELL TILT THE BALANCE TOWARD THE FIRST OPTION.

6. NOEL NOTED THAT WHATEVER WAS DECIDED FOR GREECE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE CITED AS A PRECEDENT FOR SPAIN'S ANTICIPATED EVENTUAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION. HE BELIEVES THAT THE SECOND OPTION WOULD BE AN APPROPRIATE SCENARIO FOR MOVING SPAIN IN THE DIRECTION OF EVENTUAL MEMBERSHIP, ASSUMING CONTINUED PROGRESS TOWARD DEMOCRATIZATION IN SPAIN. HOWEVER, HE ALSO BELIEVES THAT THE MOST IMMEDIATE NEXT STEP IS THE RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS ON THE BILATERAL AGREEMENT WHICH HE THINKS COULD BEGIN EARLY IN THE SPRING AND COULD BE CONCLUDED QUICKLY. THEREAFTER, THERE SHOULD BE A SETTling-IN PERIOD OF AT LEAST A YEAR BEFORE ANY NEW INITIATIVES ARE LAUNCHED BY EITHER PARTY. HE BELIEVES IT WILL BE PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO BEGIN CONSIDERATION OF A GREEK TYPE EC-SPAIN ARRANGEMENT PRIOR TO SPAIN'S UNDERGOING SOME EXPERIENCE WITH NATIONAL ELECTIONS. HE ALSO NOTED THAT, IN HIS NEWSWEEK INTERVIEW, ARIA NOVARRO HAD ALSO SPOKEN OF THE NEED FOR PATIENCE AND SOME TIME FOR THE PROCESS TO EVOLVE. THUS, HE WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT THE SCENARIO HE OUTLINED COULD PROVE ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SPAIN AND THE EC. GREENWALD

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